



## ALL CHILDREN ACHIEVE COMMITTEE

### Meeting Report May 6, 2004

PRESENT: Chair Ken Yeager, Vice-Chair Judy Chirco, and Councilmember Terry Gregory

ABSENT: Vice Mayor Pat Dando (excused)

STAFF: Kay Winer, Barbara Jordan, Avo Makdessian, Jane Light, Sara Hensley, Maria Hurtado, Gordon Yusko, Angel Rios, Cornelia Van Aken, Joe Charfauros, Deborah Simon, Megan Doyle, Trang Nguyen, Diane Miller, Christina Gilmore, Judy Glickman,

GUESTS: David Valladolid, Virgilio Vargas (Parent Institute for Quality Education)

The meeting was convened at 1: 40 p.m.

- a. Report on K-12 Student Usage at the City of San José/San José State University Joint Library (Library)

Jane Light, Library Director, introduced Cornelia Van Aken, Youth Services Coordinator. Jane announced that the move to the new library has produced a triple digit increase in usage by the community, as compared to the old Martin Luther King Library. Jane stated that one reason for this is the new large space designed specifically for children. She also added that the location on the campus is a big draw – teachers planning class visits see the impact of bringing students to a library and a college campus all in one trip. Jane also stated that students who are Education majors or getting their Master's Degree in Education are also using the children's collection quite heavily because it is a great part of their professional preparation. One other reason is the fact that the new library is now closer to residential neighborhoods, which makes it more accessible for families.

Chair Yeager asked if the Library works closely with San José State University students in terms of youth programs. Jane replied that they have started working with them as tutors and also with the adult literacy program.

Chair Yeager also inquired about the parking situation, which is no longer free. Jane reported that the Department of Transportation did a survey a few months ago on how the public got to the library, if and where they parked. Jane stated that they found usage by members of the public has increased by 70% more in spite of lack of free parking.

Jane reported that in April, 2004, the Library had its 2,000,000<sup>th</sup> visitor. She stated that they are running 30-35% ahead of where they thought they would be.

Jane also spoke of the Educational Resource Center, which is a product of the partnership between San José State University and the City. It includes State-approved textbooks, which the University gets to support its educational program. This resource center is used by students and teachers, and other information is also available to parents, homeschoolers and other teachers in the community. Jane stated that the Director of SJSU developed an advisory committee comprised of principals, teachers, school superintendents from different school districts, and twice a year, this board would choose a topic and explore the website in some depth on the topic the whole education community can use, have displays on programs about it. The first topic they picked was to compile a database of award-winning programs in all the school districts in the County. Jane added that the SJSU Director is working currently on a large grant for science curriculum resource throughout the County that would improve the curriculum and share what materials people have across the districts.

Chair Yeager asked that this report be shared with Janice Rombeck of the San José Mercury News to be published in its Thursday neighborhood edition.

Jane proposed to return to the Committee in the fall to report on their first year experience in the new building.

Councilmember Gregory asked about the impact of the budget process on the ability to deal with any potential growth in use of the new library. Jane replied that in the Manager's recommended budget, one of the cuts in the library is 9 FTE at the King Library. She stated that they would have to look at fine-tuning the hours in the children's services and limit the class visits to what they can handle. Jane also mentioned that they would have to look at reducing the daily story time hours.

Councilmember Gregory also asked how staff would prepare the public for the reduced hours and services. Jane stated that the library would have handouts about the change of hours and cuts in services, which will begin on August 1.

He also asked about the public using the conference rooms. Jane stated that outside users have to meet some criteria: a) the group is putting on a program that is available to the public; b) the group has to take a tour of the library to educate the users of the resources the library has to offer. Councilmember Gregory asked if there is any plan to impose a fee for using the conference rooms. Jane stated that although they do charge at neighborhood

libraries for use of rooms for events that are not co-sponsored by the library, there are no plans to do so at King. She added that they let people use the rooms for free as long as they listen to what the library has to offer and this fulfills the library's marketing objective.

Vice-Chair Chirco asked if the King Library has a youth outreach program at sites and schools. Cornelia stated they do, i.e. the library card campaign. Staff visit local elementary schools and do presentations on library services and give out library cards. They also do outreach also at community events. She also asked if there is an evaluation system from teachers and others who visit. Cornelia replied that although there is no evaluation system in place, the library gets their feedback from teachers and students in other ways, such as thank you posters.

Councilmember Gregory asked if the library has an infrastructure in place for youth volunteers. Cornelia replied that the library has a teenreach program citywide that has around 400 members. Each branch has a chapter and there is an advisory council that meets at the King Library and they also have a core of teensreach volunteers that specifically work in the King Library. They handle tasks such as the monitoring the summer reading program, tidying, etc.

**Upon motion of Vice-Chair Chirco, seconded by Councilmember Gregory, the Committee accepted the report.**

- b. Update on Parent Institute for Quality Education (Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services)

Joe Charfauros, from the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Grants Unit, introduced David Valladolid, President of the Parent Institute for Quality Education, and Virgilio Vargas, Director of Services in the local area.

Joe gave an overview of the PIQE program, which is a communication-based volunteer organization that works with PRNS through the BEST program. PIQE is an interesting and innovating concept to train and educate parents and families who are not familiar with the American educational system to take responsibility to assist their children in schools.

Mr. Valladolid commended the City of San José as the standard that they are trying to replicate in other parts of the State. When the Mayor came into office, he created the Family and Schools Initiative that promoted the City of San Jose, the community and the school districts to partner to address the issue of parental involvement. As has been stated, PIQE has had an incredible relationship, growing with the business community. Even with school districts facing cutbacks, the request for PIQE is still growing because they align perfectly with "No Child Left Behind" in terms of the elements of parental involvement. The program is a nine-week program, with the first half focusing on the home environment. The program focuses on self-esteem issues, communication, building a good learning home

environment, promoting reading, monitoring homework, and visiting schools to find out more on their children's academic performance. Many parents, especially newcomers, often feel that they deliver their children to the school and they let education happen there. PIQE recognizes that parental involvement begins in the home and works on moving it into the schools.

Mr. Valladolid also mentioned the collaborative work over the past ten years with the Stanford Research Institute. Through this collaboration, PIQE developed a follow-up component to the nine weeks where they stay with the parents for four months after completion of classes to reinforce all the good behaviors. They also developed a teacher workshop to help teachers embrace and recognize the social capital that all families regardless of income or economic status, bring to the mix that parents are the first and lifelong teachers.

Joe added that under the BEST and HNVF grant funds, staff have asked community-based organizations to begin to include a parental element in their service delivery since all providers interact with parents and families, regardless of the particular service they provide under the BEST or HNVF funds. Joe stated they wanted these agencies committed to the idea that in addition to the partnerships with law enforcement, schools or other agencies, they have to recognize the role of a parent in the home. Joe stated that in their meetings with agency and parent representatives through the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force efforts, one of the issues they have discussed is the need to build the structure in family units so that parents can be parents to their children. He stated that they hope these agencies will have a greater partnership with parents in the future.

Vice Chair Chirco asked how many schools districts PIQE has helped in the San José area. Mr. Vargas replied that PIQE works with all school districts in the entire Santa Clara County. Mr. Vargas also stated that although PIQE prefers that parents attend workshops in the district where their children are studying, they are welcome to attend in other districts, as well.

Vice Chair Chirco also asked why only 15 teachers in San José were trained. Mr. Valladolid replied that the teacher workshop was a pilot program in a couple of schools. PIQE provide the teachers a stipend and provide six hours of discussion and dialogue to share research-based data, as well as successful strategies that different teachers used. Vice Chair Chirco asked what evaluation tool PIQE uses to see the impact of the program on the teachers and if there was a mechanism used to evaluate their expectation. Mr. Valladolid said the expectation was pre-imposed – they found that when teachers completed the six-hour workshop, there was a change in attitude as to how important it was to invite parents into the process.

Joe reported that BEST does have a survey which asks for a response on the part of the parent participant that assesses their child's ability to communicate in the school, to participate in the activities in the school room, to begin planning and having a vision for the

future with respect to their education or career. Teachers of those students are also asked this survey – their students’ successes and increased competencies. Vice-Chair Chirco mentioned another program that is funded by the State that also trains teachers and was wondering if there is a way to compare data.. Joe stated that we could include our own survey as part of our grant application to the State.

Councilmember Gregory commended Mr. Valladolid and Mr. Vargas on their work and PIQE’s contribution to San José. He asked why the projection to serve parents this year is less than last year’s. Mr. Vargas replied that it is mostly economic – many schools are facing budget cuts; and the other reason is that parents are relocating to other areas so there is a decrease in students. Mr. Vargas also mentioned that for PIQE to make school districts recognize that its program should be a priority, he stated that they attend as many meetings so they can reach out and make school districts aware that parental involvement is a key component in the success of a child at school.

Councilmember Gregory asked how the PIQE program helps teachers accept parental presence, not just at teacher-parent conferences, but on a daily basis, lets parents engage daily in school activities so that they feel like they are a part of their children’s school life, as well. He also asked what is being done to prepare the school system to actually accept the level of involvement that these parents are taking on. Mr. Valladolid replied that as the number of parents increases and their involvement becomes greater, the more the school system will be forced to respond. He added that PIQE promotes that parents don’t go just when there is a crisis at hand. Parent should begin relationship-building from the day their children start so that they become friends and partners with the school.

Chair Yeager asked how PIQE gets their non-City funding. Mr. Valladolid stated that out of the \$120,000 non-City funds, schools pay half the cost, and PIQE fundraises the other half – from grants from Hewlett-Packard, AMD, Applied Materials, etc.

**Upon motion of Councilmember Gregory, seconded by Vice-Chair Chirco, the Committee accepted the report.**

- c. Update on Early Care and Education Youth Program Budget Priorities (Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services/Library)

Maria Hurtado, Deputy Director of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, introduced Gordon Yusko, Senior Supervising Librarian, and Angel Rios, PRNS Recreation Superintendent. The report focused on the merger of the Early Care and Education and the Library’s Partners in Reading Program.

Angel reported that in the spring of 2003, this Committee recommended that the Library and PRNS explore areas of possible collaboration on similar programs offered to the same client base. This led to the mutual strategy of merging PRNS’ Early Care and Education

Program with the Library's Early Literacy Program. Angel stated they anticipate to be fully merged by July 1. In the interim, Angel and Gordon have set up a leadership succession to ensure a smooth transition. He stated that some of the benefits from this merger are: all school readiness programs will be offered from one department; resources for children, families and early educations will be combined to reduce duplication; increased coordination of services; synergy of expertise among staff; and ongoing General Fund savings of approximately \$200,000.

Gordon reported on the next steps the two departments will be taking. He stated they would convene a joint working session between Library and Early Care and Education staff. Gordon also mentioned that staff from both departments would continue to provide updates to the Council and to both the Library and Early Care and Education Commissions. Each commission will have a liaison to the other so communication is ensured.

Councilmember Gregory asked where the \$200,000 savings would come from. Angel stated that it would come from the elimination of a management Library position and a Youth Outreach Worker II position from PRNS.

Councilmember Gregory also asked about the areas between the two departments that did not align well that are still facing a challenge. Gordon responded it is the area of Adult Literacy component, which did not exist in the Office of Early Care. Gordon stated there is a difference in programmatic design between Adult Literacy and Early Care. Jane added that aligning Early Care and Adult Literacy would be another issue that they would have to face. Maria also added that they have enlisted the help of a consultant to look at those areas.

Angel also added that one challenge for all members of the staff is the learning curve in terms of what they end up with, first, the ability to fully staff this strategy which has been challenged to date; secondly, they end up with an opportunity to really build the adult literacy component and integrate it into an early care strategy which completes the whole continuum. Angel added that the other challenge is that it is a paradigm shift for both departments – PRNS is letting go of doing something that they have been doing for a number of years, and for the Library, it is taking on something that is non-traditional. Jane added that there would also be a team-building challenge for the two teams that are currently functioning separately. Maria added that they are consistently working to address transition issues between the two departments and also ensuring that the Library Commission and the Early Care and Education Commission are communicating to bridge the gap. Angel added that on the commission level, both the Library and the Early Care and Education Commissions have expressed commitment and support to make the merger happen successfully.

In closing, Vice-Chair Chirco stated that there was a lot of expertise in PRNS which the Library does not have that depth in experience yet. One of the goals she would like to see is to see what are the obstacles between state licensing and City planning. She said PRNS has really worked hard to bring in extra money for Smart Starts and she is now looking forward to partnering with someone from the Library to handle grants. She also looks to Gordon and Angel to shepherd the Commissions in managing change. She has challenged Gordon to meeting with each Early Care and Education Commissioner. She said each Commission member is a valued asset to the community and should continue. She would like to see the date for the Joint Working Session sooner than later. She stated she would also like the Early Care and Education Commission to meet with the Library. Jane stated that she attended the last Early Care and Education Commission meeting, and she said they agreed to send two of their commissioners to the Library Commission meeting so that there would be some communication between the two. Vice-Chair Chirco suggested a brief retreat for shared visioning and discuss each Commission's plans, focus of benefits assessment. Jane stated that the Early Care and Education Commission is concerned that with the move, their Commission would be abolished. She assured this Commission that there is no intent to do that, and that the advantage of having two Commissions was that this was the commission that focused on the early care and education concerns and have real expertise in this area. Chirco added that it is such a specialized priority that she thinks having the early care and education commission is very helpful in promoting that work.

Chair Yeager asked that when the two commissions meet, to inform his and Chirco's offices so they can try to join that meeting.

**Upon motion of Councilmember Gregory, seconded by Vice-Chair Chirco, the Committee accepted the report.**

d. Oral Petitions

e. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

Ken Yeager, Chair  
All Children Achieve Committee